

Committee on Priorities and Resources
Meeting Minutes – November 5, 2019

In attendance: Professor Javier Corrales, chair; Professor Andrew Dole; Professor Jill Miller; Professor Monica Ringer; Library Administrative Assistant/Bookkeeper Susan Bradley; Provost and Dean of the Faculty Catherine Epstein, *ex officio*; Assistant Director of Athletics Kelly Mannix; Chief Financial and Administrative Officer Kevin Weinman, *ex officio*; Benjamin Gilsdorf '21; Brooke Harrington '22, *ex officio*; Sydney Ireland '23; Steven Hegarty, recorder

Not in attendance: Director of Financial Planning Thomas Dwyer, *ex officio*; Chief Human Resources Officer Maria-Judith Rodriguez, *ex officio*

Guest: President Bidy Martin

The meeting came to order at 8:30 am.

Proceedings:

1. Bidy joined CPR to discuss the New Student Center project:
 - a. The project was announced via email to campus on October 30 (see below).
 - b. The center will help to build a sense of community. This project was weighed against other campus priorities, concluding that there is a need for appropriate spaces for students to gather and for informal spaces for studying.
 - c. The college interviewed a group of architects, and requested a presentation of concept from two firms. The choice of Herzog & de Meuron and their accomplishments are discussed in the email. There will be upcoming meetings with the architects, for them to learn more about the campus community and for us to learn their culture.
 - d. The building priorities include sustainability (for example, the planned reuse of Merrill and McGuire foundations) as well as flexible spaces that accommodate multiple activities and have the potential of being converted to new uses over time.
 - e. Currently, dining is not envisioned to move from Val, but some food options are imaginable.
 - f. Suggestion to apply the lessons learned from building of science center. The success with students was noted, as well as problems associated with the rushed move and labs that were not ready.
 - g. CPR - along with other faculty committees - will have a role in shaping the functions of building
2. Next stages in campus planning:
 - a. Current intention is to convert Keefe to classroom and faculty office space.
 - b. There is a donor pledge to renovate and add to the house at 197 South Pleasant Street, for seminar space and faculty offices.
 - c. Spaces for academic events/conferences: Current available spaces are Ford Hall, plus the Science Center outside of the class schedule. The design for 197 South Pleasant St. may create additional space for smaller events, such as a workshop with fewer than 50 participants.
 - d. Another potential space solution discussed is a purpose built office building for administrative functions, freeing up existing offices on campus.
3. CPR approved the minutes from October 22 and 29.

Adjourned 9:35 am.

Respectfully submitted,
S Hegarty

Announcing New Student Center

President's Office <president@amherst.edu>

Wed, Oct 30, 2019 at 4:08 PM

To: "all-facultystaff@amherst.edu" <all-facultystaff@amherst.edu>, "all-students@amherst.edu" <all-students@amherst.edu>

Dear Community Members,

As you know, we have long needed a student center on our campus that will support a vibrant sense of community and offer students, in particular, the kinds of social spaces that are currently in short supply. This morning *The Amherst Student* published the good news that we have made a formal commitment and have selected an architect.

After several months of soliciting feedback from on-campus constituencies, using town halls and smaller-group discussions, we developed a preliminary brief and solicited proposals from architects. At the October meeting of the Board of Trustees, we presented our selection of the architecture firm Herzog & de Meuron. HdM is a Swiss firm best known for prominent projects such as the iconic "Bird's Nest" stadium in Beijing (created in conjunction with artist Ai Weiwei for the 2008 Beijing Olympics), and the transformation of the Bankside power station in London into the Tate Modern art museum. The firm also has a longstanding practice of using much smaller projects such as ours to refine their expertise in the areas for which they are best known: creating nuanced environments attuned to human experience and developing spaces that heighten, rather than mask, the specifics of a place. HdM projects feature materials and shapes in thoughtful dialogue with their surroundings and strong connections between indoor and outdoor spaces. They are well known for sustainable design. We are excited about working with them.

The new center will be situated on the current location of Merrill and McGuire, a spot chosen for the way it mediates between the historic main quad and the new Greenway. The site offers spectacular views and unusual topography that the architect is eager to preserve and feature. Although Merrill and McGuire will be taken down, the architect proposes incorporating the foundations of these buildings into the new design as both an architectural opportunity and a sustainability measure. Like the Science Center, the new building will have sustainability embedded in all aspects of its design.

During the remainder of this semester, architects and key members of our teams in facilities and student affairs will meet with students, staff, and faculty to learn more about your vision for the building and its uses. A group of 12 students graciously serve on the Student Center Engagement Committee and will continue to focus on student hopes for the center. All community members will be invited to participate in discussion meetings on a schedule to be announced very soon. We are also creating a webpage where you can submit thoughts and follow updates. Once the programming phase is complete, the architect will develop a conceptual design that will define its architectural characteristics. The goal is to complete this design by late spring 2020, at which point we will produce a timeline for the construction phase.

Your participation has already mattered. It will matter even more as we move forward to create more of the kinds of spaces that we know are lacking at the College. I look forward to the conversation.

Warmly,
Biddy